

## MINDING SOMEONE ELSE'S BUSINESS

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We are in a business known as public relations, but public relations, when considered in its true meaning and concept, goes far beyond the "servantical, run-and-fetch for me" ideology which many have attached to it. True public relations is probably the one great power on Earth which has been relatively untapped. This power emanates from one source—the power to shape men's minds, to mold their attitudes toward your way of thinking.

If you have no compunctions toward dirty words, let's call public relations by another name, one that suggests mysterious, black, evil activities (but is not really this at all)—propaganda.

Go to your dictionary and check the meaning of the word. There are many definitions, but all of them express the same purpose—**furthering your cause or ideals . . . by shaping men's minds.**

Propaganda is a scientific profession as much as biology, chemistry or medicine, dealing not with physical functions as such, but primarily with the mind. Sociology and psychology are our sciences, and our tools are many. To shape men's minds, you must first understand those minds, and employ such devices as necessary to effect alteration or strengthening. In other words, to mold man's way of thinking, in this case to an acceptance of our ambitions and action in our favor, you must use his already-established traits, such as mood, goals, dreams, ideals and thoughts to serve your own aims.

There are five basic principles upon which man thrives. These are known in scientific circles as Myths, and are, namely, the Myths of Youth, Work, Happiness, Nation and Progress. Underlying these are the presuppositions that men are basically good, that everything is matter, that man's basic aim is to find happiness, and that history repeats itself. It is these principles and presuppositions that we use to shape men's minds.

Let's examine each of the Myths separately, and see how we can use them in our purpose.

**YOUTH**—"The world belongs to the young." This is a very true phrase familiar to each of us, denoting man's preoccupation with youthful appearance, vim and vigor. Sales of cosmetics and beauty aids totaling millions of dollars annually point to the weight of this Myth, and with just a smattering of thought, you can see how this principle can be used to sway man's thinking.

**WORK**—Almost everyone does it, and those who are capable, and don't, are scorned by an affluent society which has to foot the bill. Cases of people who become so wrapped up in their work they lose track of all else are too numerous to begin to count, further proving the significance of this principle. How do we use this to further our aims? Just the very mention of the word evokes a pleasant mental image. Too, work is usually associated with manual labor, denoting the physically fit, the robust, the outdoor-type.

**HAPPINESS**—is pretty much self-explanatory, tailor-made for our purposes, and can be used over and over without becoming stagnant.

**PROGRESS**—Everyone loves a winner, and that phrase alone should prove ample to state the case.

**NATION**—is a little harder to use, although "the American Way" is a good beginning.

As with any science, there are certain rules we must follow in our campaign to sway others to our thinking, and any of these rules, if violated, will weaken our progress. An effective propaganda program is built in easy steps, taking considerable time for it to prove itself worthwhile. Nothing good is accomplished overnight. Even the brush-fire agitations and demonstrations we are all so familiar with on an international level are the result of a careful, slow building process.

Propaganda can be broken into two distinct phases, even though they are ultimately connected to produce the desired effect—that of causing an action by the public. In practice, one is the foundation upon which our campaign is built, the other is the portion of our program that shows above ground, the part that elicits response.

Our foundation is termed “integration propaganda” or, more specifically, educational propaganda. The response-maker is called, descriptively enough, “propaganda or agitation”, although it does not necessarily mean we want to provoke violence.

Now, how are our two types of propaganda used to accomplish our main objectives—to shape men’s minds and create a resulting action.

Our first task is to learn and understand our public, for we can build no campaign that will reach them unless we first are aware of their needs and wants. Propaganda is not a “God-send” to cure all ills, a balm that will persuade even the most antipathetic individual on earth. For any propaganda campaign to be effective, it must at least imply a satisfaction of need or promise a better future. But before you can promise to cure a situation, you must know what situation you are curing. The greatest mistake a propagandist can make is to misinterpret a dissatisfaction of the public, but a correct evaluation of present public sentiment is the bed-rock of our foundation.

Once the general timbre of our public is established, we then begin to prove, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that our establishment or organization is the answer to the solution. We do this, in the very early beginnings of our integration propaganda phase, by building an image of our group that is responsible, efficient, dedicated, and, above all, PROGRESSIVE. We do this by making extensive, continual use of all the media at our disposal—newspaper, radio, television, movies, posters, brochures—you name it, and USE it. The person we are trying to reach with our message must be bombarded daily in both his public and private life. He must read about us in his morning newspaper, listen to us as he drives to work, see our poster as he punches the time-clock, talk about us with his fellow workers, see us as he watches television, meet us at a club or union meeting, read about us again in magazines or pamphlets and think about us before he goes to sleep at night. And as soon as we can find a way to invade his dreams, we’ll do that, too.

There are many points to be remembered about the conduction of this integration propaganda phase. It is important that this be continuous, because the human mind, filled with facts and figures from sources other than our own, tends to absorb only a part of that which is perceived. Repetition, it has been proved over and over again, is the only way to make an image lasting. We must also make sure we follow the same line in anything we do. That line, simply, is, to paraphrase a currently popular statement “We are the greatest”. This is what the public is to remember, not necessarily the facts and figures we feed him, or even the specific incidents we direct to his attention, but the key theme, “**WE ARE THE GREATEST**”.

We must keep our public informed as to what we are doing, and also give him data with which he can use our service. But this type of build-up cannot be done daily, so we fill the balance of the time telling what we can do for him, in effect, building in his mind the idea we can do no wrong.

So far, our discussion of the integration phase of propaganda has dwelt only with the mechanics, the part that anyone with common sense could determine for himself. But let's explore the little subtleties that are the true backbone of molding opinion.

First, you must do away with the individual. As long as it is one man, with his own ideas and notions, he will repel any attempts to change his thinking. But, if we can convince him that he no longer is an individual, that he is "only one of the crowd", then our battle is almost won. Now, how do you do this? It's simple. You make him identify with some particular group or organization. He's already reading or listening to one of the mass media, which puts him into a group, so you use such phrases as "Deer hunters," or "Bow and arrow enthusiasts," or "fishermen." They come back with the continuation ". . . have found hunting on the Tennessee Game and Fish Commission's Blahblah Management Area to be EXCELLENT!" Immediately, he's part of the group, and even though he personally may not have enjoyed excellent success, he assumes the rest of his group did, and so blames himself, and not us, for his poor showing.

In all your propaganda, however, make absolutely sure you include opinion, whether it be yours directly, or veiled and masked or attributed to someone else, but it is opinion that makes a lasting impression on the mind. A set of figures pointing out good hunting may or may not stick, but the same figures, coupled with an opinion such as ". . . this is great," or ". . . we need more of this," will be far more effective.

So we rock along with our integration propaganda, continuously extolling our good points, occasionally providing necessary information, and in general, building an image of ourselves that is hard to erase.

But suppose a very controversial subject comes along that conceivably could cause us problems. Let's assume, for the sake of example, we want to up the current license fee from \$5 to \$20. Now on the surface, this would seem to be an insurmountable task, but I contend that if we have done our job of prepropaganda (integration) correctly, if we condition the public to the point where anything we do is right, even this task can be accomplished.

First, we must believe in the goal ourselves, and believe it to such an extent that anything we say or write exudes this.

We then begin an intense campaign, flooding the media and all other sources of contact with what we are attempting to do. In every case, we point WHY this is desirable, and especially, how the public will be better off for what we do.

Again, this is continuous. You can't expect the job to be accomplished with one news release, or with just one meeting. A continuous "harping" on the subject makes the matter seem more imminent.

Now we must stimulate action. We have said before that propaganda, if it is true propaganda, should cause an action or reaction by the propagandees. We demand they do something, such as write letters, or demonstrate, or burn buildings, whatever action we desire of them.

Ultimately, you will win, because, in the face of solidified public opinion, an opinion that **MAKES ITSELF KNOWN**, there can be no opposition that will be heard. But just because you have won, you can't quit. History has proven that propaganda efforts left to simmer of their own accord collapse and die, so we must revert back to our propaganda of integration until we again call on the masses to do our bidding.

Of course, propaganda is more diverse, more complex, even infinitely more effective than this; but for our purposes, the above skeletal plan is quite enough. We are not trying to subjugate a mass of citizenry to slavery, although propaganda is quite capable of doing this; we are not attempting to establish a totalitarian government, which propaganda can provide. Instead, we are simply molding opinion in our favor. We have the most powerful method of conquest known to man in our hands, and we must be careful how we use it.

We have seen before that propaganda is not a God-send to cure all ills. It is not some miracle that, once performed, will guarantee success. There are limitations, and in understanding and knowing those limitations, we can predict with a fair degree of accuracy, our success.

(1) Certain psychological or sociological conditions must pre-exist for the mechanism to work. For example, the needs to be satisfied by propaganda must be kept in mind. At the same time, the propagandist cannot buck definite trends that have been established for some time. In other words, in the United States, no propaganda that would be against democracy and for a monarchy would be able to "take". However, as we have seen in current events, a propaganda that can make the populace lose faith in basic trends (such as democracy) can be at least partially successful.

(2) The second limitation is the necessity for consonance with the facts. A basic fact is always necessary. Propaganda can never be a propaganda of ideas, but must pronounce judgment on certain facts (whether these judgments are accurate or not).

(3) A final limitation is time, as we have pointed out before. The process must be slow and continuous.

How can we measure the effectiveness of our propaganda program? In all honesty, we must say that we can't, accurately. Of course, when a desired reaction is accomplished, we might point with pride to this as our effectiveness, but how do we know that this might not have been accomplished if we had never said a word? Logically, we must assume, however, that we did have some part in the result. Do not expect to be able to point to any accomplishment with pride and say, "we did that", because you just don't know with that degree of certainty. Rest assured, however, that we will play a major part in molding opinion, if the rules are strictly adhered to.

One final reminder: Propaganda will not win over that individual who is dead set against us and will not be swayed at any cost; conversely the man who is all for us will not be any more convinced. The undecided, the "fence-straddler", is our fertile ground.

"Not only does propaganda seek to invade the whole man, to lead him to adopt a mystical attitude and reach him through all possible psychological channels, but, more, it speaks to all men. Propaganda cannot be satisfied with partial successes, for it does not tolerate discussion; by its very nature, it excludes contradiction and discussion. As long as a noticeable or expressed tension or a conflict of action remains, propaganda cannot be said to have accomplished its aim. It must produce quasi-unanimity, and the opposing faction must become negligible, or in any case cease to be vocal."

—JACQUES ELLUL.